# Opening DOORS

## Manitoba's Commitment to Persons with Disabilities

## A Discussion Paper

June 2009

Disabilities Issues Office

Manitoba

# INTRODUCTION

Disability affects all Manitobans. At some point, all of us will experience disability, either personally, in our families or in our communities. Manitoba has a range of programs and supports for persons with disabilities. These programs and supports rely on the co-ordination of government departments. Manitoba is committed to providing integrated and sustained leadership on disability issues in order to create a more inclusive society.

In 2001, the Manitoba Government released *Full Citizenship: A Manitoba Provincial Strategy on Disability* – a policy document detailing the province's vision for the full participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in Manitoba. Over the past eight years, this strategy has guided the province's approach to disability. We have made significant strides in each of the strategy's four building blocks: income support, access to government, disability supports and employment for persons with disabilities.

As a population, Manitobans are aging and that brings increased disabilities connected to aging. We are also managing more diverse cultural issues and rapidly changing technologies that change the way we communicate and live.

The goal of this discussion paper is to expand on the vision for persons with disabilities that was outlined in the 2001 strategy. This paper outlines our ideas for moving forward and incorporates suggestions made by persons with disabilities during a number of Manitoba Round Tables on Disability hosted by the Disabilities Issues Office over the past eight years. Recommendations from these round tables have been highlighted with the following symbol.

The province will build on a variety of supports and programs already in place, including *Rewarding Work, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Strategy, Manitoba's Homelessness Strategy with a Focus on Mental Health Housing, Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative, The Aging in Place Strategy, ALL Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy* and others.

The time is right to renew our commitment to persons with disabilities. We want ongoing input from persons with disabilities, their families, caregivers, organizations, employers, researchers, and everyone wanting a more inclusive, accessible Manitoba.

If you have comments or suggestions about the proposals in this discussion paper, e-mail them to openingdoors@gov.mb.ca; or mail them to

**Disabilities Issues Office**
**Room 630 - 240 Graham Avenue**
**Winnipeg MB**
**R3C 0J7**

# Summary of Our Down Payment for OpeningDOORS Manitoba's Commitment to Persons with Disabilities

## Action in 2009/2010

### Social and Affordable Housing

Funding is now available for social and affordable housing throughout Manitoba. Projects in Brandon, Thompson and The Pas will include fully accessible units and the ground floor units for these three projects will be visitable.

### Accessible Housing

Through a cost sharing agreement with the federal government, there will be $5.4 million in new funding available for individuals and non-profit organizations to build new housing and/or complete major renovations on existing facilities to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.

### Housing with Supports

***Manitoba's Homelessness Strategy with a Focus on Mental Health Housing*** will make important new investments in developing a range of community based housing options. This will include support services for individuals with mental health and homelessness issues.

Investments to support persons with mental health issues total $10 million and include four projects:

- There will be 285 more mental health housing units with supports. Integrated housing options will range from independent living with support, to 24-hour supportive housing units.
- The Portable Housing Benefit will provide 600 low-income Manitobans who have mental health issues and unstable housing with a rent subsidy of up to $200 per month. This will help recipients access a broader range of private housing and give them added support from eight support workers in communities across Manitoba.

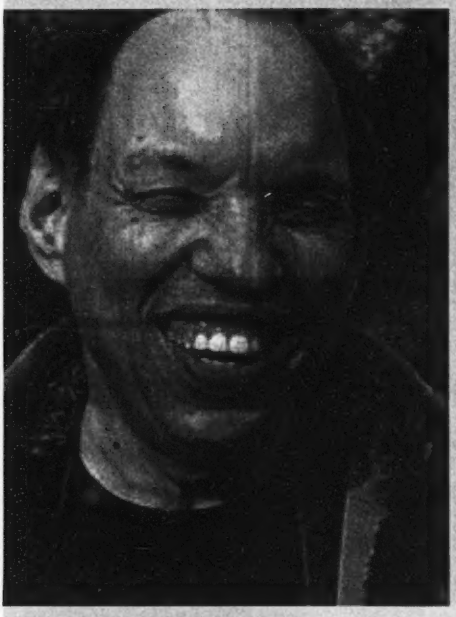
- The Manitoba Housing Wellness Initiative (CWI) will expand from five Winnipeg sites to 14 sites province-wide. The expansion includes enhanced services and 11 more housing and mental-health support workers.
- The Homelessness Outreach Team has seven outreach workers, located in Winnipeg, Thompson, The Pas and Brandon to help link the homeless with health, social services and housing opportunities.

The strategy will be enhanced and complemented this fall when the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) begins an $18-million, four-year demonstration project in Winnipeg. It will provide housing supports for up to 300 Aboriginal people with mental illness who are homeless.

## Access to Government

In 2009, the provincial government introduced the Manitoba Policy on Access to Government Publications, Events and Services to ensure persons with disabilities have equal access to government information, events and services through:

- promotion of accommodations for persons with disabilities
- training for departmental disability access co-ordinators
- print and web disability access information campaign



## Building Accessibility

In 2009/10 an estimated $2.8 million in funding will improve accessibility projects in public buildings, including:

- Emerson Tourist Information Centre Accessibility Upgrades
- Brandon Provincial Office Building Washroom Upgrades
- Portage la Prairie Provincial Office Building Washroom Upgrades
- Red River College - Replace Overpass Wheelchair Lift
- Red River College Bus Loop Stair Repair and Ramp
- Minnedosa Court House Elevator Installation
- Robert Fletcher Building Elevator Upgrade
- Agricultural Services Building Elevator Upgrade
- Morden Court House Accessibility Upgrades

In 2009/10 over $255,000 was provided to non-profit community organizations through the Community Places Program for accessibility enhancements.

## Children's Special Services

In 2009/10, Children's Special Services receives an additional $2.7 million to increase the availability of services to families. In particular, additional spaces in the Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) program for pre-school children with Autism Spectrum Disorder will be made available, as well as additional therapy interventions, respite service and assistive technology devices.

## Child Care Inclusion Initiative

Under *Family Choices – Manitoba's Five Year Agenda for Early Learning and Child Care*, $400,000 in new funding has been made available to support children with special needs through the early learning and child care system. The Inclusion Support Program will improve mentoring and training for early childhood educators to ensure children needing additional support receive the best possible care and opportunities to learn and thrive in integrated, community settings.

## Primary Caregiver Tax Credit Access Plan

This tax credit provides recognition and financial support for volunteer primary caregivers. Effective January 2009, the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit will provide up to $1,020 per year to primary caregivers for spouses, relatives, neighbours or friends whose needs are assessed at Home Care Level 2 or higher. Family Services and Housing will ensure that caregivers of eligible participants in the Supported Living Program and Children's Special Services Program automatically qualify for the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit.

## Increased Community Living Supports

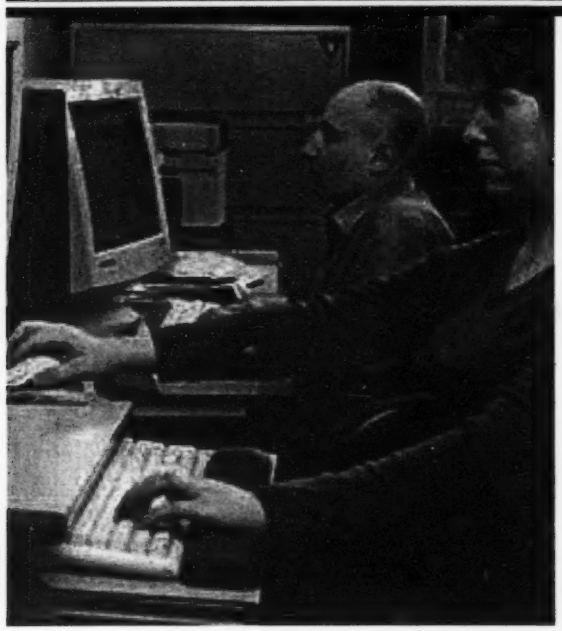
The Supported Living Program will receive $10.1 million in new funding for 2009/10. The program will support more people, increase the number of supported living service agencies and increase agency grants. Over the past decade, the Supported Living Program budget has increased by 223 per cent.

## Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)

The taxable portion of withdrawals from RDSPs is now exempt from family net income when calculating eligibility for three tax credits:

- Education Property Tax Credit
- School Tax Credit for Homeowners
- Personal Tax Credit

Income from RDSPs will also be exempt when calculating monthly Employment and Income Assistance benefits.



## Civil Service Disability Awareness Campaign

The Civil Service Commission has developed a government-wide disability awareness campaign for provincial employees. The goal is to promote the advantages of hiring persons with disabilities within the civil service and ensuring they have access to the accommodations and supports they need to do their jobs.

## Employment Supports

The Reaching E-Quality Employment Services program will receive $522,000 in provincial funds. The program will help 500 people with disabilities enter the labour force.

Manitoba Competitiveness Training and Trade has published a comprehensive employment guide that outlines the employment-related programs and services available to persons with disabilities.

## Accessible Education

A total of $3 million of this year's record public schools capital investment will increase inclusion of children and youth with disabilities. There will be 15 more schools with grooming rooms/specialized washrooms, chair lifts and elevators for students with disabilities.

## Proposed Enhancements to *The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act*

Legislation was introduced in May to strengthen the Personal Injury Protection Plan (PIPP). It includes a new definition of catastrophic injury. When the legislation is passed, it will provide $14 million in enhanced benefits for victims of catastrophic automobile accidents.

## Diabetes Call to Action

Funding of $250,000 was committed to create a website and public awareness campaign to help Manitobans identify the risk factors that can lead to Type 2 diabetes and find ways to prevent or delay the onset.

The province will also improve access to needed diabetes foot care in three northern communities. A pilot program will employ Manitoba-made camera technology to connect patients in Easterville, Grand Rapids and Moose Lake with doctors in Winnipeg.

## Transportation

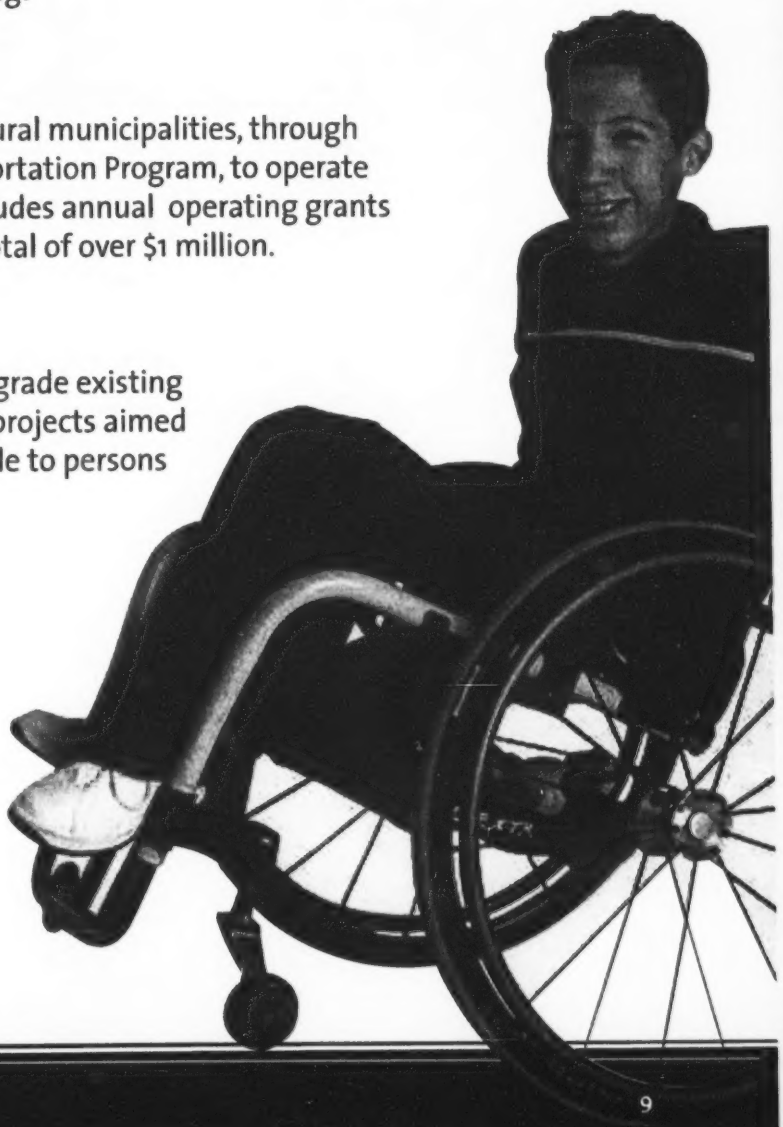
The province provides funding for rural municipalities, through the Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program, to operate Handi-transit services. Funding includes annual operating grants and one-time capital grants, for a total of over $1 million.

## Accessible Recreation

Funding has been committed to upgrade existing parks and campgrounds, including projects aimed at making recreation more accessible to persons with disabilities.

## SERVICELINK

SERVICELINK, a new online tool, has been developed to help people identify what Family Services and Housing benefits and services they may be eligible for.



## Manitoba's Commitment to Persons with Disabilities

# 1 Housing

### Objective:

**To improve the availability of quality housing for persons with disabilities that is *affordable, accessible, supportive* and *safe***

### Key Accomplishments

- **Round Table Recommendation:** Manitoba Housing has introduced the Manitoba Shelter Benefit to help persons with disabilities and others pay rent in the private housing market
- Between 2006 and 2008, provincial design consultants helped government agencies, builders, developers, community groups, architects and the public develop and promote design features so new homes are accessible and visitable for persons with disabilities.
- EIA room and board rates for individuals requiring care and supervision, and who are living with a relative, were increased to equal the rates paid for individuals living with non-family members.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** Manitoba Housing promotes visitable design features.
- A Manitoba Housing Accessibility Committee, that includes the Disabilities Issues Office, is working to determine opportunities to provide accessible units specifically designed for persons with disabilities.

**The essential elements of visitable design are:**

- one zero-step entrance, at the front, back or side of the house
- all main floor doors, including bathrooms, with at least 81.3 cm (32 inches) of clear space
- at least a half bath, but preferably a full one, on the main floor

- Manitoba Housing is undertaking major renovations to make 45 units accessible for persons with disabilities.
- Approximately 20 per cent of units built under the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) and **HOME***Works!* Initiatives contain visitable design features.
- Manitoba Housing has collaborated with a number of nonprofit community-based organizations to build four accessible homes in inner-city areas of Winnipeg to accommodate persons with disabilities. The homes include "green" features and environmentally friendly products for cabinets, countertops and paint.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** The Disabilities Issues Office has worked with Manitoba Housing and the City of Winnipeg to host two public meetings to raise awareness about visitable design and housing for persons with disabilities.
- Staff and tenants living in provincial housing are now participating in the Project Safe Home Strategy, which includes:
  - training for all property managers
  - better communication about lease agreements
  - new security requirements
  - a new, focused investigative team
  - a property restitution initiative to ensure tenants take responsibility for property damage
  - a $1 million closed circuit television and card access initiative
  - rapid graffiti removal
  - a new, dedicated, Manitoba Housing office to manage all elements of fire safety

## 2009/10 Down Payments

- Funding is now available for social and affordable housing throughout Manitoba. **HOME***Works!* has provided funding for new projects in Brandon, Thompson and The Pas that will include fully accessible units, and the ground floor units for these three projects will be visitable.
- Through cost-sharing agreements with the federal government, $5.4 million in funding is available for individuals and non-profit organizations to build new housing and/or renovate existing facilities to improve the accessibility of housing for persons with disabilities.
- 15 visitable units will be included in Phase 2 of the Waverly West development.
- Manitoba's Homelessness Strategy with a Focus on Mental Health Housing will make important new investments to support persons with mental health issues totalling $10 million:
- There will be 285 more mental health housing units with supports. Integrated housing options will range from independent living with support, to 24-hour supportive housing units
- The Portable Housing Benefit will provide 600 low-income Manitobans who have mental-health issues and an unstable housing situation with a rent subsidy of up to $200 per month. The benefit will give access to a broader range of private housing, as well as housing supports provided by eight support workers in communities across Manitoba.

- The Manitoba Housing Wellness Initiative (CWI) will expand from five Winnipeg sites to 14 sites province-wide. The expansion includes enhanced services and 11 housing and mental-health support workers.
- The Homelessness Outreach Team has seven outreach workers located in Winnipeg, Thompson, The Pas and Brandon to help link the homeless with health, social services and housing opportunities.

## Future Directions

- The province will continue to enhance housing options with supports for persons with mental health concerns and/or addictions.
- Work will be undertaken to increase the availability of accessible and visitable housing.
- A Homelessness Prevention Summit (Fall 2009) will develop a long-term strategy to prevent homelessness.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** The Manitoba Building Standards Board has recently developed a sub-committee to review barrier free requirements in the Manitoba Building Code. The new Building Code is scheduled for release in 2011. Ammendments to the Building Code only apply to all new construction or major renovations of buildings in Manitoba
- There will be new initiatives to address the safety concerns of persons with disabilities who live in Manitoba Housing.

### **HOUSING:** Questions for Feedback

1. How can the province better promote visitable design?
2. What can be done to improve access to safe, affordable, quality housing for persons with disabilities?
3. What strategies can better promote accessible design to landlords and builders?

# 2 Employment and Income Security

## OBJECTIVE #1:

**To establish the Province of Manitoba as a model employer for persons with disabilities**

### Key Accomplishments

- Manitoba's Civil Service Diversity Strategy includes a commitment to increase the number of persons with disabilities in the civil service to five per cent by 2012.
- The Civil Service Commission has added a second program co-ordinator for persons with disabilities to support and increase community liaison, communication, education and recruitment.

### 2009/10 Down Payment of the Disability Strategy

- This year marks the first intake of the Public Administration Internship Program for Persons with Disabilities. It is a two-year training program to provide better opportunities for persons with disabilities to work in government.
- The Civil Service Commission has developed a government-wide disability awareness campaign for provincial employees. The goal of this campaign is to promote the advantages of hiring persons with disabilities in the civil service and ensuring they have access to the accommodations and supports they need to do their jobs.

### Future Directions

- **Round Table Recommendation:** The Civil Service Commission will continue to work towards its government-wide goal of having seven per cent of civil service employees identify themselves as persons with disabilities.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** The province will ensure employment equity achievements are reported regularly.

- The province will continue to work at improving accommodation, support and advocacy for civil servants with disabilities.

## OBJECTIVE #2:

**To increase the employment rate among persons with disabilities**

### Key Accomplishments

- The 2006 *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* (PALS) data indicated that, in 2001, 58.7 per cent of Manitobans with disabilities were employed at some point during the year. By 2006, this number rose to 59.9 per cent – the third best employment rate for persons with disabilities across Canada.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** *marketAbilities* initiatives will continue to help persons with disabilities find and keep jobs.
- In 2009, the Rewarding Work Health Plan benefits, including drug, dental and optical benefits, were extended for up to two years for all single parents and persons with disabilities who move from Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) to paid work.
- A new Rewarding Volunteer benefit is available to persons with disabilities who receive EIA. The benefit is to encourage and reward volunteerism.
- Stages of Change is a pilot project delivered through Opportunities for Employment. It helps persons with disabilities get ready for work and find good jobs.

- Through Get Ready! (a Rewarding Work training and education program) Employment and Income Assistance recipients may be eligible for education and training programs, including university and other post secondary programs, for up to four years.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** The province-wide Disability Awareness Campaign promotes the advantages of hiring persons with disabilities.

## 2009/10 Down Payment on the Disability Strategy

- The Reaching E-Quality Employment Services program will receive $522,000 in provincial funds. The program will help integrate 500 people with disabilities into the labour force.
- Manitoba Competitiveness Training and Trade has developed a comprehensive employment guide outlining employment-related programs and services available to persons with disabilities.

## Future Directions

- The province will work with private sector employers to promote the hiring of persons with disabilities.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** The province will consider incentives to help private employers with accommodation costs when hiring persons with disabilities.
- The supports available to persons with disabilities within the Employment and Income Assistance program will be promoted more widely.
- Comprehensive supports for persons with disabilities who are acquiring job training will be developed.
- The province will work to address the employment concerns of persons with episodic disabilities or illnesses.
- The Manitoba government will work to enhance return-to-work supports available through the Workers Compensation Board.

## OBJECTIVE #3:

**To enhance the income security of persons with disabilities**

### Key Accomplishments

- Income Assistance for Persons with Disabilities (IAPD) benefits have been increased in response to the additional costs of living with a disability.
- A number of initiatives have been introduced to help persons with disabilities and their families save for the future, without affecting their monthly EIA benefits:
  - EIA participants with disabilities may save up to $200,000 through the federal Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) without affecting the amount of their monthly EIA benefits.
  - Persons with disabilities receiving EIA may be able to receive up to $500 per month, from families or others, without affecting the amount of their monthly benefits.
  - EIA liquid asset exemptions have been increased to up to $4,000 per person to a family maximum of $16,000. This allows people on EIA to save without affecting their EIA benefits.

### 2009/10 Down Payment on the Disability Strategy

- The taxable portion of withdrawals from RDSPs is exempt from family net income in calculating eligibility for the Education Property Tax Credit, School Tax Credit for Homeowners and Personal Tax Credit.
- The province will continue its investment in **ALL**Aboard: **Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy**.

## Future Directions

- The province will work to increase awareness of the supports available to persons with disabilities within the EIA program.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** New approaches to a long term income support program for persons with severe and prolonged disabilities will be explored.
- The province will continue to work to develop new ways to help persons with disabilities save for the future.

## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME SECURITY:
### Questions for Feedback

1. What are some ways we can support persons with disabilities in their search for sustainable employment?
2. How can the province provide income support to persons with long term disabilities, outside the traditional EIA program, and still encourage them to find full-time jobs?
3. What can be done to encourage private employers in Manitoba to hire persons with disabilities?

# ❸ Rights and Justice

## OBJECTIVE #1:

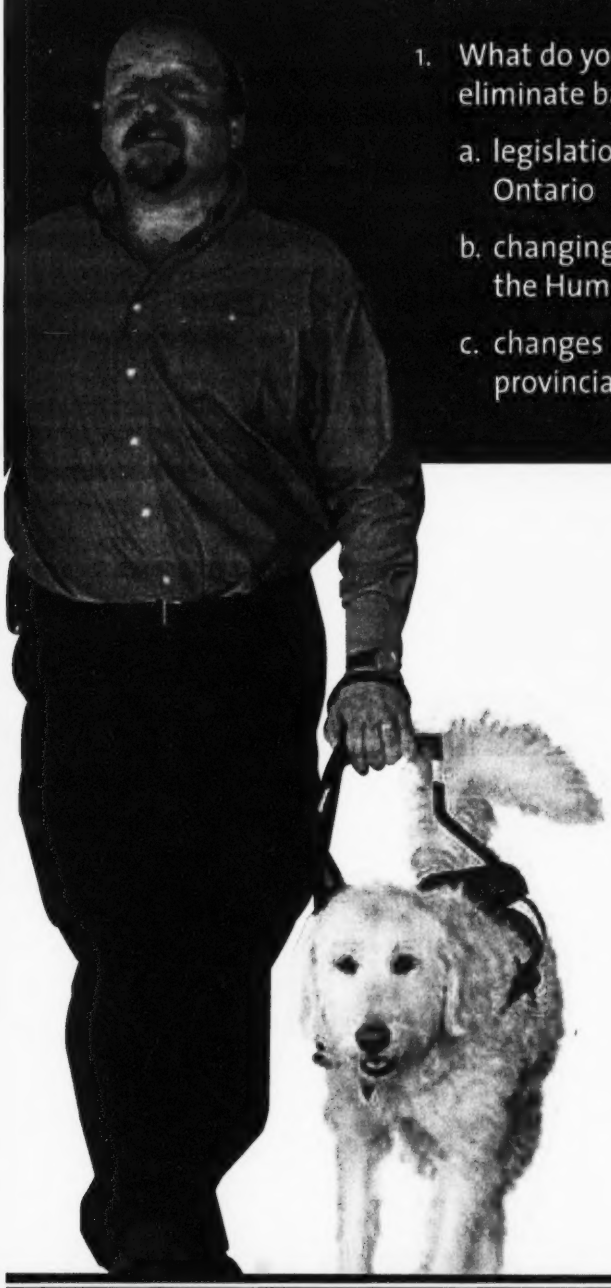
**To make Manitoba a leader in promoting and protecting the human rights of persons with disabilities**

### Key Accomplishments

- Manitoba Justice announced the creation of a new court system dedicated to offenders who have mental health issues.
- The FASD Youth Justice Project was developed in 2004, to provide appropriate recommendations for dealing with young offenders. This project, for youth living in Winnipeg and The Pas, identifies and develops family oriented and community based resources.
- **Round Table Recommendation:** A Disability Lens was introduced to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are considered in the development of new policies, programs and legislation.
- The Supported Living Program (SLP) has worked closely with Manitoba Justice to develop a province-wide protocol to follow when a vulnerable person is arrested and detained in a provincial correctional centre. There are now procedures to ensure the appropriate supports are provided to both the vulnerable person and the corrections system.

### Future Directions

- **Round Table Recommendation:** A consultation process will be pursued in order to establish an effective framework to advance the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Continue to support the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Supports for persons with all types of disabilities who come into contact with the justice system will be enhanced.



## RIGHTS AND JUSTICE:

### Questions for Feedback

1. What do you think would work more effectively to eliminate barriers to participation in society:
   a. legislation, such as what is being implemented in Ontario
   b. changing the Human Rights Code or the mandate of the Human Rights Commission
   c. changes related to building codes and other provincial statutes, for example

# 4 Gender and Diversity

## OBJECTIVE:

**To ensure the distinct needs of persons with disabilities who are *Aboriginal, women, seniors, Franco-Manitobans, newcomers and/or live in rural or northern Manitoba* are adequately addressed by provincial programs and policies.**

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- The Disabilities Issues Office has played a key role in offering gender and diversity analysis training and consultation to policy analysts throughout government.
- The province asked for public input to help update the Women's Health Strategy.

- **ROUND TABLE RECOMMENDATION:** In 2006, the Disabilities Issues Office hosted a sharing circle on issues affecting Aboriginal persons with disabilities.
- Manitoba was the first province in Canada to reach an agreement with the federal government to implement Jordan's Principle.
- Winnipeg was selected as a site for one of five demonstration projects under the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC). The $18 million, four-year research project will provide housing and support in Winnipeg for up to 300 Aboriginal people who are homeless and living with mental illness.
- The province is partnering with eight Manitoba First Nations to develop Winnipeg's first personal care home for Aboriginal elders. This project will help elderly Aboriginal people age with dignity in an environment that respects traditional approaches to aging. The new 80-bed, 15,850 square metre (52,000-square-foot) facility will provide Aboriginal seniors with the health care and supports they need to remain in their community, close to family, friends and other resources.

Jordan's Principle is named for Jordan Anderson, a young First Nations boy who was born with severe disabilities. Jordan's Principle puts the needs of children with multiple disabilities first and supports the principle that needed care not be delayed or disrupted by jurisdictional disputes.

- The implementation of the Age-Friendly Manitoba initiative will help communities identify features that promote healthy, active living.
- An Age-Friendly Manitoba brochure and website have been developed to highlight the benefits and advantages of developing communities that support healthy, active aging for all Manitobans.
- *The Aging in Place Strategy* has created more than 380 new supportive housing units and over 2,900 Supports for Seniors in Group Living spaces. These spaces provide a range of services and supports to seniors who do not require the extent of care that would be provided in a personal care home setting.
- Nurse practitioners in Winnipeg's inner city are providing services for vulnerable populations. They are working through the Health Action Centre and the Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY) Clinic, at Broadway Pharmacy on Broadway Avenue.

## 2009/10 Down Payment on the Disability Strategy

- In 2009, the province invested in the start up of the DisAbled Women's Network of Manitoba (DAWN). The funding will help ensure a sustainable resource for women with disabilities in Manitoba.
- The province will work to improve access to needed diabetes foot care in three northern communities. A pilot program will employ Manitoba-made camera technology to connect patients in Easterville, Grand Rapids and Moose Lake with doctors in Winnipeg.

## Future Directions:

- The Disabilities Issues Office will continue to promote gender and diversity analysis across government.
- Aboriginal cultural awareness training for service providers will be developed.
- First Nations and Aboriginal organizations will be consulted about rights and justice issues specific to their populations.
- The Manitoba/Canada Joint Committee on the implementation of Jordan's Principle will continue to develop the elements needed to successfully implement Jordan's Principle. This includes engaging First Nations.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** Service delivery to support off-reserve Aboriginal persons with disabilities will be strengthened.
- An inventory of programs and services for Aboriginal persons with disabilities will be created.
- Supports for persons with disabilities in rural and northern Manitoba will be improved.
- The province will work to better provide information about disability supports to Manitoba's newcomers.
- Supports for women with disabilities who experience abuse and violence will be improved.
- The Age-Friendly Manitoba initiative will include more work with municipalities across the province to create safe, accessible community spaces.

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY:
### Questions for Feedback

1. In what ways can governments improve awareness about the particular challenges facing Aboriginal persons with disabilities?
2. What can all levels of government, First Nations and non-profit agencies do to better co-ordinate the delivery of services to Aboriginal persons with disabilities?
3. How can the needs of women and diverse populations be better integrated into all programs and services?
4. How can transportation services for persons with disabilities in rural and northern communities be improved?
5. What can we do to better support Manitobans with disabilities who are aging?

# 5 Disability Supports

## OBJECTIVE:

**To develop and enhance sustainable supports for children and adults with disabilities**

### Key Accomplishments

- **Round Table Recommendation:** An initiative has been introduced to improve access to communications technology for persons with severely impaired speech.
- Between 2007/08 to 2008/09, funding for Children's Special Services was increased by 10.5 per cent (to $23.7 million). These funds supported families who required additional supports in order to raise their children with disabilities at home.
- Through the Children's Therapy Initiative (CTI), more children are being served and services are available in a greater number of communities. In December 2008, Churchill established a CTI in that region, making the Children's Therapy Initiative available in every region across the province.

### 2009/10 Down Payment on the Disability Strategy

- Children's Special Services has received $2.7 million in new funding to increase the availability of services to more families, including new spaces in the ABA program for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, increased therapy interventions; additional respite service and more assistive technology devices.
- On May 26, 2009, legislation was tabled that strengthens the Personal Injury Protection Plan (PIPP). It includes a new definition of catastrophic injury. The province announced it will add $14 million to benefits for victims of catastrophic crashes. People with serious injuries may qualify for a higher income replacement indemnity, permanent impairment payment and personal-care expense reimbursement. The bill will clearly establish Manitoba Public Insurance's (MPI) responsibility to

help claimants obtain benefits under other provincial programs such as home care and family support.

## Future Directions

- **Round Table Recommendation:** To better meet the need for early intervention, the province will improve co-ordination of programs for children with disabilities.
- **Round Table Recommendation:** The province will explore a variety of ways to improve access to government and community programs that provide technical aids and devices.
- The Crisis Accommodations and Supports Initiative (CASI) for adults with disabilities in Winnipeg will be integrated into a comprehensive, cross-departmental provincial strategy to keep adults with disabilities free from abuse.
- The provincial government will work with the hearing impaired and Deaf communities to increase access to assistive technology (ex: video relay service, sign language interpretation).

### DISABILITY SUPPORTS: Questions for Feedback

1. What can we do, in Manitoba, to improve access to technical aids and devices?
2. What can be done to better support persons with mental health disabilities?
3. How can support for families with children with disabilities be improved, especially during the transition to adulthood?

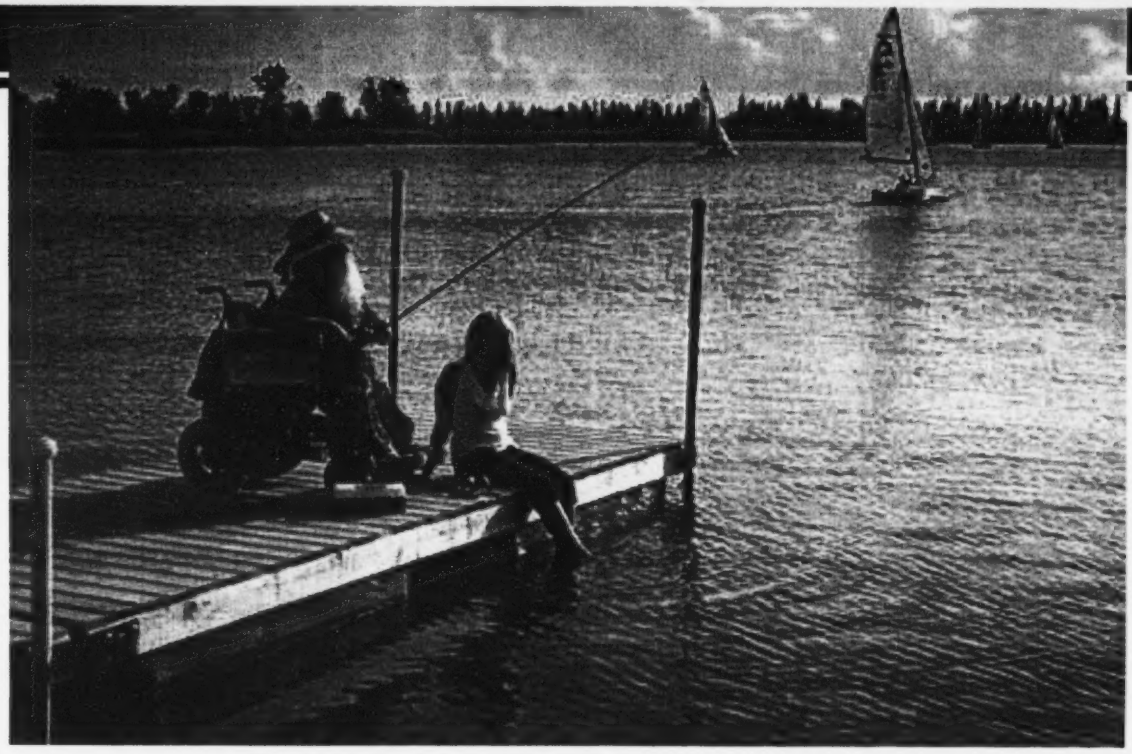
# 6 Accessibility

## OBJECTIVE:

**To promote *accessible, inclusive communities* through enhancements to transportation, recreational opportunities and infrastructure**

## Key Accomplishments

- **Round Table Recommendation:** Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation (MIT) has committed to ensuring no new barriers are created in new construction and major renovation projects. MIT has also committed to ensuring that any long term building leases meet accessibility requirements.
- Significant accessibility upgrades have been made to buildings owned and leased by the provincial government. Government has invested about $3.4 million in accessibility over the past several years. The province's investments include accessibility upgrades to:
  - Whiteshell Tourist Information Centre
  - Red River College, Notre Dame Campus in Winnipeg
  - the Woodsworth Building in Winnipeg
  - the Legislative Building (west, east and north entrances) and a new, universal accessible ramp
- Since 2005, over 46,451.52 square metres (500,000 square feet) of government-leased space has received accessibility upgrades.
- In 2008/09 Neighbourhoods Alive provided over $180,000 in funding for accessibility related projects.
- The Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program provided funding for 66 rural municipalities with funds to support the operation of Handi-transit services in their communities (up from 61 in 2000).



- A total of $5.4 million in one-time funding for replacement vehicles went to municipalities in 2007 to operate Handi-transit services. To date, this funding has allowed almost half the Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program communities to buy replacement vehicles.
- Manitoba Conservation created a new permit category for hunters with disabilities. It authorizes the use of a vehicle in game hunting areas that are normally restricted or prohibited. It also allows crossbows and mechanical devices for archers who have permanent, upper body disabilities.
- **Round Table Recommendation:** To increase recreation opportunities, the province has made Manitoba's provincial parks more accessible to persons with disabilities. Campsites have been upgraded and there are more family vacation cabins and yurts available in campgrounds. Seven parks now have wheelchair accessible yurts. The province currently has a total of 56 accessible campsites, five accessible cabins and 20 accessible yurts.
- Manitoba Conservation has committed to ensuring that accessibility is a key factor in the design of all improvements and new buildings within provincial parks.

## 2009/10 Down Payment on the Disability Strategy

- An estimated $2.8 million will be allocated to support accessibility projects, including:
  - Emerson Tourist Information Centre Accessibility Upgrades
  - Brandon Provincial Office Building Washroom Upgrades
  - Portage la Prairie Provincial Office Building Washroom Upgrades
  - Red River College - Replace Overpass Wheelchair Lift
  - Red River College Bus Loop Stair Repair and Ramp
  - Minnedosa Court House Elevator Installation
  - Robert Fletcher Building Elevator Upgrade
  - Agricultural Services Building Elevator Upgrade
  - Morden Court House Accessibility Upgrades
- The province provides funding (through the Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program) to communities to support Handi-transit service for persons with mobility disabilities. Funding support includes annual operating grants and one-time capital grants. Approved funding for 2009/10 totals $1,074,500.
- A total of $9.65 million was provided to upgrade existing parks and campground infrastructure to make them more accessible. Funded projects include:
  - Birds Hill Park shower building and bike path
  - Grand Beach washroom along Grand Beach boardwalk
  - new Duff Roblin Provincial Park
  - a new washroom and shower building at Nutimik Lake in Whiteshell Provincial Park
  - design and development of a new, fully accessible campground
  - six new yurts each, for Stephenfield and Camp Morton Provincial Parks

- In 2009/10, over $255,000 was provided to non-profit community organizations through the Community Places Program for accessibility enhancements.

## Future Directions

- The province will work to position Manitoba as a travel destination for persons with disabilities.
- An inventory of accessible services and attractions for travelers will be developed.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** The province will continue to increase recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities, including increased accessibility at parks and campgrounds.
- A long term plan will be developed to ensure all Manitoba government buildings are accessible.
- Through the Age-Friendly Manitoba initiative, work will continue with municipalities throughout the province to create accessible community spaces.
- Leisure and recreational opportunities provided by the Red River Floodway expansion will be accessible to persons with disabilities.

## ACCESSIBILITY:
### Questions for Feedback

1. How can communities and all government levels help persons with disabilities access recreational opportunities?
2. How can transportation services for persons with disabilities be improved?
3. How can Manitoba be positioned as a travel destination for persons with disabilities?

# 7 Education and Training

## OBJECTIVE:

**To ensure all persons with disabilities have *access* to *inclusive, supported early years, primary, secondary and post secondary education***

## Key Accomplishments

- Documents on appropriate educational programming for students with disabilities have been developed and distributed to help explain regulations and standards.
- **Round Table Recommendation:** Implementation of *Bridging to Adulthood: a Protocol for Transitioning Students with Special Needs from School to Community* began in Fall 2008.
- An orientation manual for Direct Service Workers entitled *Journey of Support* was developed and made available to workers who provide direct support to families caring for their children and adult children with disabilities at home. The manual offers information on the values and principles around disability and how best to support people with disabilities and their families at home and in the community.
- First Jobs, a joint provincial/federal initiative, provides high school students with disabilities with their first jobs. It provides monitoring, support and evaluations of student employees and their employers.
- The Neighbourhood Eco Team project, in Brandon, is operated by Career Connections Inc. From December to March, six students with disabilities receive life skills and employment training, work experience and supplemental work placements.
- Get Ready! (a Rewarding Work training and education program), will connect people who receive EIA and cannot find a job, with training opportunities. Participants attend education and training programs (including university and other post secondary programs) for up to four years.

- Through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the School-to-Work Transition Program provides non-profit agencies and private contractors with funds to help participants leaving the secondary school system find and keep jobs.

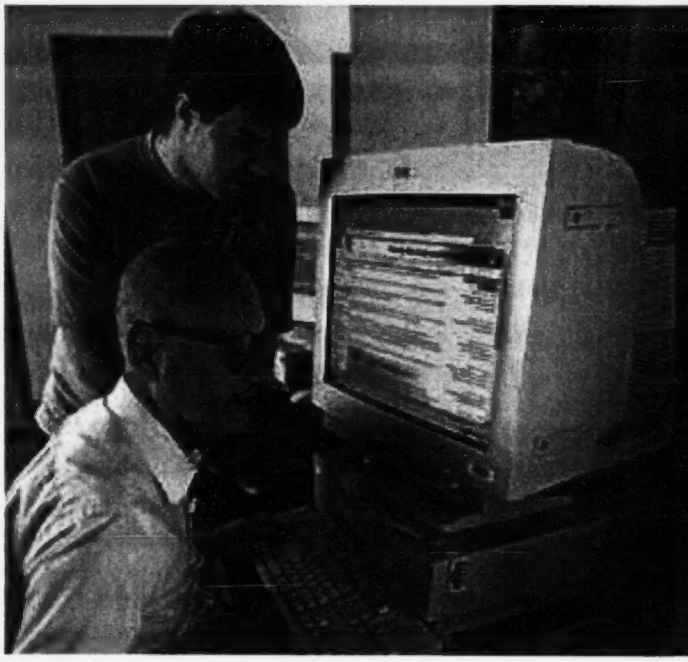
## 2009/10 Down Payments

- Under *Family Choices – Manitoba's Five Year Agenda for Early Learning and Child Care* $400,000 in new funding has been made available to support children with special needs through early learning and child care system. The Inclusion Support Program will improve mentoring and training for early childhood educators to ensure children needing additional support receive the best possible care and opportunities to learn and thrive in integrated, community settings. This additional investment brings the total funding for the Inclusion Support Program to $11.3 million.
- Children's Special Services will receive an additional $2.7 million, to increase the number of spaces in the applied behaviour analysis (ABA) program for pre-school children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and to enhance existing services for Manitoba children with disabilities and their families.
- As part of a record public schools capital investment, $3 million will ensure 15 more schools can accommodate students with disabilities with the addition of grooming rooms/specialized washrooms, chair lifts and elevators.

## Future Directions

- Teachers will continue to get help in supporting primary and secondary school students with disabilities, with an increased focus on:
  - student specific planning
  - *Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Learning Disabilities*
  - rural and northern communities

- Funding from the Public Schools Finance Board will continue to help increase accessibility in Manitoba schools.
- **Round Table Recommendation:** The province will continue to improve the processes for students who are moving from school to adult services.
- The province will work to increase the number of students with disabilities it employs through STEP Services, the province's student employment referral program.
- Literacy training programs will be enhanced to better include persons with disabilities.
- The province will explore more ways to support Manitobans with disabilities who want post secondary education.
- Manitobans with disabilities will be encouraged to pursue lifelong learning.



## EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

### Questions for Feedback

1. How can Manitobans help youth with disabilities gain employment experience?
2. How can we improve early learning for children with disabilities?
3. How can Manitoba support students with disabilities in post secondary education and training?

# 8 Health Promotion

## OBJECTIVE:

**To *promote* healthy living for all persons with disabilities and those at risk of disability, including those affected by *FASD, chronic illness* and *mental health issues***

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

*Extended Health Benefits*

- Health benefits, including drug, dental and optical benefits, under the Rewarding Work Health Plan were extended for up to two years to all single parents and persons with disabilities who leave EIA to take a job.
- The Deductible Installment Payment Program (DIPP) for Pharmacare helps reduce financial hardship for individuals and families whose eligible drug costs are a significant portion of their monthly family income. The Payment Program is an option for eligible Manitobans to pay their annual Pharmacare deductible in monthly installments.
- Changes to Pharamcare will provide additional treatment coverage for persons with disabilities who have diabetes, mental health, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), asthma, rheumatoid arthritis and severe forms of psoriasis. New generic drugs requirements mean Manitobans have access to lower-cost prescriptions.
- A new agreement with the Manitoba Orthotists and Prosthetists Association will assure the continued access to orthotic and prosthetic devices for persons with disabilities. It will also recognize the clinical services provided by professional orthotists and prosthetists, and it will establish an expert advisory committee to review and make recommendations on new orthotics and prosthetic technologies.

*Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Initiatives*

- Stop FASD is a three-year community outreach program providing intensive support to women who are pregnant or have recently had a baby and are struggling with alcohol or drug use. The program is offered at four sites, two in Winnipeg, one in The Pas and one in Thompson. Portage la Prairie, Flin Flon and Dauphin are possible future sites.
- Spectrum Connections provides services and supports for Manitoba youth and adults living with FASD. The program provides services for youth and adults who do not qualify for other Manitoba funding.

*Health and Wellness*

- Funding has been provided to regions to strengthen an integrated team approach to chronic disease prevention and healthy living across the province. A key aim is to prevent disabling conditions.
- Manitoba Health and Healthy Living has implemented a staffing education initiative focused on long term care.
- Funding has been provided for an education program for staff who work with people with dementia in home care, personal care homes, physicians' offices, families etc. The program is co-ordinated by the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba and is province-wide.
- The Regional Diabetes Program is a province-wide initiative for prevention, education, care and support services. As part of the program, more than 700 health care providers have been trained to screen Manitobans and teach the risks for the development of Type 2 diabetes, diabetes complications and/or other chronic diseases. In addition, the Manitoba retinal screening program has screened more than 1800 people in over 50 communities in the North since 2007, helping to prevent vision loss and blindness. Through early detection, prevention, intervention and partnerships (ex: Canadian National Institute for the Blind), this program promotes independent living for persons who are blind or have poor vision.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** The province has implemented Get Better Together!, a self-management program to help people living with chronic disease gain the skills and confidence required to manage their condition and maintain active, fulfilling lives.

- The province has provided $3 million to the Rick Hansen Going Forward Together legacy initiative. This investment will provide support at the community level for research and improved quality of life for persons living with spinal cord injuries.
- The Unified Referral and Intake System (URIS) was created to support children who require special health care interventions while they are apart from their parents or guardians so they can safely attend school, child care, recreation programs or respite. URIS is a joint initiative between the partner departments of Family Services and Housing, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and Manitoba Health and Healthy Living.

*Injury Prevention*

- The Provincial Injury Prevention Strategy supports key activities to reduce injury at provincial, community, professional and personal levels.
- Manitoba Healthy Living, in partnership with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and Manitoba Labour and Immigration, has developed the Safe Play Area Development Grants. These grants provide farm families with up to $500 to help with the costs of building secure, enclosed play areas for their children.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Labour and Immigration and Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation have implemented a two-year pilot Farm Safety Check Program. It supports 60 producers with management practices that help them ensure the safety and health of everyone on their farms.
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives offers farm safety training programs on farm all terrain vehicles (ATV) operation, tractor operations, horse handling, cattle handling and first response to farm incidents.

*Service Delivery*

- Manitoba Health and Healthy Living has a long standing funding arrangement supporting American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting and intervener services.

## 2009/10 Down Payment on the Disability Strategy

- A $250,000 investment will support development of a website and public awareness campaign to help Manitobans identify the risk factors that can lead to Type 2 diabetes and find ways to prevent or delay it.

- Legislation has been tabled that strengthens the Personal Injury Protection Plan (PIPP) and includes a new definition of catastrophic injury. Once passed, the legislation will provide an additional $14 million to increase benefits for victims of catastrophic crashes.
- Mental health stabilization services for youth (including a crisis stabilization centre and mobile crisis service) in Thompson will be established and the crisis stabilization service in Interlake will be expanded.
- The province is developing a new, community based program to give youth, adults and families timely access to early intervention and treatment for eating disorders. In 2009/10 the province will invest $238,000 in this program.
- The province will continue to invest in the Unified Referral and Intake System to support more children who require health care interventions to participate in community programs while apart from their parents or guardians.

## Future Directions

- The province will support healthy living teams to work with primary care teams and others to expand existing chronic disease prevention and healthy living programs.
- Manitoba's *Provincial Injury Prevention Strategy* will continue to employ preventative measures to help reduce the leading causes of injury for children, youth and adults in Manitoba with special focus on motor vehicle collisions, falls, workplace injuries, farm injuries and drowning.
- The province is developing Canada's first mental-health crisis response centre. It will be developed near the Health Science Centre in Winnipeg and will strengthen supports for vulnerable people and Manitobans with mental illness.
- Manitoba Health and Healthy Living is currently developing a provincial mental health strategic plan (with consumers, families, service providers, decision-maker groups) that will guide the planning of the mental health system over the next five years.

- Manitoba Health and Healthy Living will continue to pursue ongoing partnerships with community organizations to further the self-help model of support for persons with disabilities and chronic conditions and to promote health and wellness.
- The province is working to create an interdepartmental, cross-jurisdictional initiative to keep persons with disabilities free from abuse.
- Healthy living components will be integrated into assisted living facilities.
- Information about healthy living will be made more accessible to persons with disabilities.
- **Round Table Recommendation:** The provincial government will work to enhance access to primary care for persons with physical and intellectual disabilities.
- Workplace safety and health initiatives will continue.
- Diabetes prevention activities for high-risk populations will be expanded.

## HEALTH PROMOTION:

### Questions for Feedback

1. How can we better support persons with mental health issues?
2. How can we better support persons with chronic illnesses?
3. How can we ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities in healthy living initiatives?

# 9 Community Living

## OBJECTIVE:

**To help adults with disabilities live more *independently* in communities of their choice and expand *sustainable* community living options**

## Key Accomplishments:

- Employment and Income Assistance has increased room, board and care rates to families caring for adult children with disabilities.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** The provincial government has demonstrated its commitment to community living for persons with intellectual disabilities. Since 1999/2000, funding for the Supported Living Program has increased by 223 per cent, the Pelican Lake Centre has been closed and the number of residents at the Manitoba Developmental Centre has been reduced by over 30 per cent (to 314 from 467).

- **Round Table Recommendation:** Manitoba Health and regional health authorities support self and family managed home care options.
- The Primary Caregiver Tax Credit for the 2009 tax year provides recognition and financial support to volunteer primary caregivers.

## 2009/10 Down Payment on the Disability Strategy

- Family Services and Housing will actively offer the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit to eligible participants in the Supported Living Program and Children's Special Services Program so more caregivers can take advantage of the tax credit.
- Funding for the Supported Living Program has been increased by $10.1 million. This will allow programs to support more people, increase the number of supported living agencies providing services and increase grants provided to agencies. Between 1999/2000 and 2009/10, the Supported Living Program budget has increased by 223 per cent.

## Future Directions:

- **Round Table Recommendation:** Family Services and Housing will complete the design of a comprehensive, multi-year strategy for the long term sustainability of the Supported Living Program.
- The province will work to establish a community inclusion fund and develop partnerships with various agencies to promote greater community inclusion and support networks for adults with disabilities.
- More supports will be set up to allow persons with disabilities and their families to save and build assets for the future.

## COMMUNITY LIVING:

### Questions for Feedback

1. How can Manitoba better help adults with intellectual disabilities live more independently in the communities of their choice?
2. How can we better support persons with disabilities as they, their families and caregivers age?
3. How can we help families and friends support adults with intellectual disabilities?

# 10 Smarter Government

## OBJECTIVE:

**To create a *co-ordinated, accessible* and *person-centered* service delivery framework to better serve children and adults with disabilities**

### Key Accomplishments

- **Round Table Recommendation:** Workers' knowledge of issues affecting persons with disabilities has been enhanced. The Staffing Stabilization Initiative within Family Services and Housing offers subsidies to allow service providers to complete training through Red River College's Certificate Program in Disability and Community Support.
- Specialized Services for Children and Youth is an initiative focused on the integration and co-ordination of service sites for Manitoba children and youth with disabilities and special needs. The initiative addresses the many recommendations made over the last few years to improve the co-ordination and integration of services for children and families.
- The Manitoba eHealth initiative has made improvements in information technology that allows information to be shared more easily with all health providers. It makes more services available closer to an individual's home.
- Access Centres make it easier for individuals and families to find all the services they require under one roof. The centres are convenient community locations where people are treated as a whole, rather than dealing with issues separately.

### 2009/10 Down Payment on the Disability Strategy

- **Round Table Recommendation:** In 2009, the province introduced the Manitoba Policy on Access to Government. It ensures persons with disabilities have equal access to government information, events and services through:
  - promotion of disability accommodations
  - designation and training of departmental disability access co-ordinators

- print and web access information campaign

- **Round Table Recommendation:** An online information tool called ServiceLink has been designed to help people identify what Family Services and Housing benefits and services they may be eligible for.

## Future Directions

- **Round Table Recommendation:** The province will develop disability awareness training for public service providers.
- An inventory of programs and services for Manitobans with disabilities will be created.
- The provincial government will support the implementation of a central call centre and website to improve access to information about government and non-profit programs and services for Manitobans with disabilities.

- **Round Table Recommendation:** Manitoba will work to improve the co-ordination of services and supports for children and adults moving from one program to another.

### SMARTER GOVERNMENT:
Questions for Feedback

1. How can the province better co-ordinate the delivery of services for persons with disabilities?
2. How can the province improve awareness and sensitivity about disability issues for service providers?
3. How can the province provide better access to information about services and programs for persons with disabilities?
4. How can the province better engage community agencies that support Manitobans with disabilities?

# Co-ordination and Monitoring

Although much has been accomplished, the provincial government recognizes that more work needs to be done to achieve our vision for persons with disabilities. *Opening Doors: Manitoba's Commitment to Persons with Disabilities* presents what we see as the next steps to further improve the supports for persons with disabilities in Manitoba.

As we move forward, we are committed to a transparent and inclusive process defined by:

## 1. Community Involvement

Feedback from key stakeholders will play an important role in guiding the implementation of a future disability strategy. Over the coming months, a variety of sectors will be consulted to ensure we are moving in the right direction.

Consultation begins with this document and an invitation to provide your comments to the Disabilities Issues Office (DIO). Experts' discussion groups and community consultations will also be organized. Please visit the DIO website for further information at **www.gov.mb.ca/dio**.

## 2. Cross-government Co-ordination

In 2002, the province established the Disabilities Issues Office to serve Manitobans with disabilities and report to the Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities. The DIO will continue to co-ordinate the work of government departments, disability groups, corporate and community organizations.

The Assistant Deputy Minister's Committee on Disability Issues was created to ensure senior officials collaborate in creating a seamless approach to disability issues across government. It will be renewed to direct the government-wide implementation of the provincial disability strategy.

Government-wide working groups will develop and implement specific initiatives within the strategy. These working groups will use staff and resources from the departments involved, as well as from the DIO.

Disability access co-ordinators will be placed in all government departments. They will be trained and supported by the DIO to implement Manitoba's Policy on Access to Government Publications, Events and Services.

Through the use of a Disability Lens, all provincial departments will be encouraged to consider the specific needs and circumstances of persons with disabilities, and to ensure that all persons with disabilities are included in the creation, implementation and evaluation of government activities.

## 3. Leadership

This discussion paper will renew the mandate of the Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities. This includes: fostering the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in all segments of society within the framework of public policy, programs and provincial legislation.

## 4. Reporting

The Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities will provide an annual, public report to the Legislature on the status of persons with disabilities in Manitoba.

The Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities will convene a provincial forum in 2012 to receive feedback on the renewed action plan from persons with disabilities and their families.

## Demonstrating Progress

To measure progress, key indicators of progress will be tracked. The list below includes examples of indicators that may be used to track the success of this initiative.

## Housing

- number of housing units that are fully accessible
- availability of housing units with supports
- number of housing units that contain visitable features

## Employment and Income Security

- employment rate of persons with disabilities employed by the civil service
- employment rate of persons with disabilities of working age in Manitoba
- earnings gap between persons with disabilities and persons without
- poverty rate of persons with disabilities, using the Market Basket Measure

## Rights and Justice

- percentage of disability related human rights complaints

## Gender and Diversity

- increase the percentage of housing with supports that allow persons with disabilities and seniors to age in their own homes
- increase the services and supports available to Aboriginals in urban areas

## Disability Supports

- access to technical aids and devices for persons with disabilities

## Accessibility

- number of accessible campsites, yurts and cabins in provincial parks
- percentage of accessible public buildings

## Education and Training

- percentage of persons with disabilities enrolled in post secondary institutions
- number of spaces for students with disabilities in the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP)
- number of spaces in the applied behaviour analysis (ABA) pre-school program
- number of direct service workers using the *Journey of Support* manual for orientation

## Health Promotion

- diabetes rates in Manitoba
- motor vehicle accidents, falls and workplace, drowning and farm injuries
- number of children with health care needs able to participate in community activities

## Community Living

- number of persons transitioning from the Manitoba Developmental Centre to community based placements

## Smarter Government

- number of Access Centres across the province

## CO-ORDINATION AND MONITORING:

### Questions for Feedback

1. What other ways can the province further strengthen the involvement of the community in guiding and monitoring the implementation of this strategy?
2. Are there other disability related issues you want included in a future?
3. Are there other ways you want to see the government use to evaluate the strategy?

If you have comments or suggestions about the proposals in this discussion paper, please forward these to the

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Available in alternate formats, upon request.

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